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COUNTRY Albania

REPORT NO.

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TOPIC Military Installations in Tirana

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ACTION TO CIA

EVALUATION

PLACE OBTAINED

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DATE OF CONTENT November 1948 to Mar 1950

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DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED 5 December 1950

REFERENCES

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ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE) 1 - sketch on ditto

REMARKS

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Barracks Installation on the Road to Durres.

1. The barracks installation is an old Italian establishment, a large part of which had been destroyed and, having been reconstructed, was occupied by troops in 1948. Tank storage halls and repair installations were located in the western section, military quarters in the eastern section, and a military motor vehicle repair shop in the central section of the billeting area.
2. Prior to June 1949 the installation was occupied by a tank unit of about 400 young troops, 20 to 22 years of age.
3. The officers wore olive-drab uniforms, golden epaulets and round service caps. Soviet stars both with and without the hammer-and-sickle emblem were worn on the caps. Officer candidates wore golden epaulets with one red longitudinal stripe. Lieutenants wore the same epaulets with one silver star, senior lieutenants with two silver stars, captains with three silver stars and first captains (sic) with four silver stars.
4. The NCO's wore olive-drab uniforms with epaulets to match and collar patches of undetermined colors. Junior sergeants wore two golden cross braids, sergeants three, and senior sergeants four.
5. Enlisted personnel also wore olive-drab uniforms with epaulets and colored collar patches, according to the branch of service. Silver tank insignia were worn on the epaulets.
6. Soviet officers, including two field officers, were frequently observed in the barracks area. They often witnessed the troop training and occasionally interrupted.

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7. The unit had about 40 armored vehicles, including eight T-34 tanks, four or five two-axle armored scout cars, and several short-barreled 70 to 80 mm SP guns. 25X1

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8. The unit was equipped with a great number of two and three-axle GMC trucks. Some of the trucks were equipped with seats and were used as personnel carriers. 25X1

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9. Arms observed with troops undergoing basic infantry training included submachine guns with both round drum magazines and curved clip magazines, Soviet rifles with folding bayonets, and air-cooled light machine guns with curved box-magazines feeding the cartridges from the top.

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10. [redacted] the barracks had been reconstructed on the old foundations. The eastern section was described as an Infantry Barracks and the western section as a Tank Barracks. The number of the troops in the eastern section was estimated to be 300 in January 1950.

11. The number of tanks observed to be parked in front of the tank storage halls in the western barracks section never exceeded five or six. These tanks were of type T-34, according to other PWS. The number of the troops observed in the western barracks section was estimated at 80 to 100. They wore olive-drab uniforms.

12. Only five or six tanks were seen to take part in the troop review held on the Durres road in the direction of the city center on 1 May 1949.

Military Motor Vehicle Repair Shop

13. The repair shop between the barracks sections mentioned included motor vehicle storage halls, workshops, one billet for military personnel and several administration buildings. A total of about 250 troops and civilians were employed in the repair shop in June 1949. The troops were accommodated in the repair shop area. They wore brown Soviet-style blouses in summer, and olive-drab uniforms in winter.

14. Motor vehicles of various Albanian military units were overhauled in the repair shop, according to PWS who were employed there as drivers. Most spare parts came from the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia. Motor vehicles observed included three-ton two-axle Chevrolet trucks, two and three-axle GMC trucks, ZIS trucks, Fiat trucks and Mercedes Diesel trucks. An increased number of Czech-made Tatra and Praga motor vehicles were observed since 1949. These vehicles included three and seven-ton Tatra trucks of two and three-axles and with air-cooled engines, and two-axle three-ton Praga trucks.

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15. [redacted] the motor vehicle repair shop was always working at full capacity prior to January 1950, repairing Albanian military motor vehicles.

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Barracks Installation on the Road to Kavaje.

16. The barracks installation was presumably built during the Italian occupation. War damage had been repaired. The installation was referred to as Shumkini Barracks or Artillery Barracks. The billeting area measured about 1,000 by 500 meters. The eastern section of the area was built up with large multi-story buildings, serving as military quarters. The western section was built up with six to eight two-story brick buildings, which were not yet occupied and parts of which were still under construction.

17. In January 1950 the barracks were occupied by an artillery unit of 1,000 to 2,000 troops. Albanians referred to this unit as a division. The troops wore olive-drab uniforms with blue collar patches and silver crossed-gun-barrel insignia on their epaulets.

18. Artillery pieces observed there included guns of about 150 mm caliber, equipped with shields, iron wheels with longitudinal perforations and solid tires, mounted on split-trail carriages and towed by G.I.C. trucks serving as prime movers; various guns of up to about 100 mm, equipped with limbers and drawn by horses; motorized AT guns; twin-wheeled light AT guns of 20 to 30 mm caliber, equipped with pneumatic tires; and four-wheeled AA guns of about 80 mm caliber. The total number of the guns was estimated at not more than 50. The stables in the billeting area were occupied by 150 horses, according to a rough estimate.

25X1 19. [REDACTED] frequently observed horse-drawn guns of about 100 mm caliber on the Kavaje road. One section of the barracks was referred to as Infantry Barracks.

25X1 20. In January 1950 [REDACTED] estimated the built-up area of the installation referred to as Artillery Barracks at 1,200x500 meters. Reconstruction was not finished by January 1950. Artillery units with horses were seen in the barracks area. The guns were of 76.2 mm and of 105 mm. [REDACTED] Some units in the barracks were trained with light infantry weapons.

25X1 21. [REDACTED] the 25X1 stables were occupied by mules that belonged to an infantry unit which was equipped with Italian rifles and Soviet machine guns. An artillery monument, consisting of two crossed shells and surmounted by a flying eagle, was in the barracks area.

Barracks Installation Near the Railroad Station.

22. The barracks installation was referred to by the Albanians as "Bulgaria". It consisted of one multi-story building, a wooden barracks building and one storage hall, in which building material was stored prior to June 1949. An artillery unit of about 200 troops was in the barracks. A first captain was the ranking officer. The unit was equipped with mortars, which were packed on mules. One mule was capable of carrying a disassembled mortar of about 80 mm.

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Barracks Installation on the Road to Elbasan.

23. The installation occupied the area of the place of the former King Zog and a park, a total of about 1,000x400 meters. Prior to January 1950 it was occupied by units of the Albanian People's Guard, (Mbrojtës Rpulli), which were in charge of security tasks in the Tirana area.
24. The personnel wore olive-drab uniforms, had five-pointed red stars on their upper left sleeves and wore round service caps with Soviet stars. The insignia of rank corresponded to that of the Albanian Army.
25. The units were equipped with Soviet-made rifles, air-cooled light machine guns, and medium mortars. They had GMC and ZIS trucks and some passenger cars.

Officer School.

26. The Officers' School in Tirana covered an area of about 600 square meters. Prior to January 1950, the trainees were officer candidates (NCO's) and officers, ranking from lieutenants up to and including captains. Blue (artillery), red (infantry), and green service colors were observed. The instructors were officers of all ranks, and included Soviets.
27. Training included daily classroom instruction and field training. The training ground was located south of the school. Primarily infantry training with light and heavy infantry weapons was observed there. Some trainees were observed to carry signal equipment.
28. Officers and NCOs of the school were employed at a nearby military radio station, which covered an area of about 150x100 meters. The radio station consisted of one building and six to eight wooden masts, about 15 meters high, supporting antenna wires.

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29. [REDACTED] 500 officers ranking from lieutenant to captain belonged to the school in November 1945. In addition, about 500 boys, averaging 12 years of age, were accommodated in the school. They were referred to as cadets.
30. The school was a multi-story building, about 100x80 meters. About 800 Albanian boys, between 13 and 18 years of age, were accommodated there in July 1949. The cadets wore light-brown uniforms with special insignia of rank. They had olive-drab dress uniforms with a wide red stripe along their trousers.
31. Albanian and Soviet officers, as well as civilians, were employed as instructors. Training focused on theoretical instruction, much of which was given by civilian instructors. Outdoor training included sports and rifle drill under the supervision of Albanian officers.

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Headquarters.

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32. In May 1950 military headquarters and government buildings were located in the New-Tirana city sector, southwest of Skanderbeg Square, on both sides of 17th November Street. Sentries were observed to stand guard at almost all roads leading to this city sector. [redacted] the apartments of high-ranking Soviet officers and high-echelon Albanian government officials were located in this city sector.

33. One prominent five-story white building, about 100x30 meters, was referred to by local residents as "corps headquarters." High-ranking Albanian and Soviet officers were observed to continually enter and leave this building. Officers wearing red cuffs on their overcoats and red stripes along their trousers were seen there. A rear service headquarters was in a neighboring building. A guard unit in charge of guarding the New-Tirana city sector was accommodated in a building located on the other side of the corps headquarters building, which had formerly served as quarters for King Zog's bodyguard. The guard troops wore olive-drab uniforms with white-bordered red sleeve cuffs, service caps with red ribbons, red stripes on their trousers and white gloves.

Ammunition Depots.

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34. Two ammunition storage bunkers were built into a rocky hillside south of Dibra Street. Each bunker was about 20x10 meters. The bunkers were not in use in December 1949. Ammunition was to be stored there [redacted]

35. Some additional ammunition storehouses were located on the road to Durres. Four buildings, each about 10x10 meters, were constructed in the spring of 1949 in an area about 100x30 meters. These storehouses were of concrete and had revetments on their sides.

36. In November 1948 an extensive ammunition depot was observed on the road to Elbasan, a distance of several kilometers from Tirana. The depot was established in a hilly woodland. It covered an area of about 1,000x400 meters, the longer side facing the road. A great many wooden buildings, resembling temporary barracks, could be seen through the trees. Sentries standing guard in the depot area wore uniforms with blue service color. Shipments of ammunition boxes were trucked in daily from the direction of Tirana [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] ammunition was unloaded from a Soviet freighter in Durres at the same time.

Fuel Depots.

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37. A fuel depot was located on the road to Beshkuti* and was referred to as the Linz fuel depot, after a tiny neighboring village. It covered an area of about 500x300 meters and was in an olive grove.

38. A concrete surface fuel tank, 5 to 6 meters high and 10 meters in diameter, with walls about 30 cm thick, was built in August and September 1948. The tank was partitioned into 4 compartments by concrete walls. [redacted]

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39. Drums containing fuel and oil were stored in the depot. Some of the fuel was supplied from the Albanian oil district and part from Durres, [redacted] Daily outgoing fuel shipments were observed. They were made only by military motor vehicles. 25X1

Ration Supply and Clothing Depot.

40. A ration supply and clothing depot was located in an area of about 500 x 300 meters, on the road to Kavaje. About twelve wooden buildings were observed. Prior to January 1950 this depot supplied all units of the Tirana military post with rations and clothing. The outgoing shipments were made exclusively by military motor vehicles.

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[redacted] Comment: "Burgaria", in Albanian, is understood to refer to a prison, or prison-compound.

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*[redacted] Comment: Possibly the road which further on leads in a north-easterly direction to Peshkop is meant here.

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